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E.O. 12958: DECL: RELEASE OF UK-IRAQ STATEMENT
TAGS: [PREL](#) [UK](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: FINAL TEXT OF BLAIR-MALIKI JOINT STATEMENT

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR ROBERT S. FORD, FOR REASONS 1.4 (B)
AND (D).

11. (C) The British Embassy provided post, Monday 0930 hrs Baghdad time, the final version of the joint statement to be issued by PM Blair and Maliki during the UK Prime Ministers visit to Iraq.

12. (C) Begin text:

Joint statement about the visit of the UK Prime Minister
The British Prime Minister welcomed the formation of the government of national unity as a major step towards transforming Iraq into a democratic country. He also praised the programme of the new government (attached) for its commitment to upholding the rule of law, promoting Iraq's unity and national reconciliation, protecting and increasing Iraq's sources of prosperity, and spending Iraq's resources wisely and with integrity, for the benefit of all Iraqis. The two Prime Ministers agreed that those who wish to promote sectarian interests and violence must be given no space in the new Iraq. The Iraqi Prime Minister stated his strong opposition to sectarianism and racism in all its forms, and his commitment to respecting the rights of women in all fields, to reconciliation and to economic recovery. The Iraqi Prime Minister stated his government's commitment to a strong compact with the international community, with a key role for the United Nations and the World Bank. His government plans to set out a clear strategy for national development explaining how the government's objectives for reconstruction will be met, and the assistance it will need from friendly governments and international institutions. Both governments also agreed to continue efforts to widen the circle of countries that support Iraq's efforts towards stability and security. In persuading others to make available their support, the Iraqi government would provide a compelling vision of the way ahead showing how international assistance would complement its actions in pursuit of the common goal of a stable Iraq at peace with its neighbours. The two Prime Ministers discussed specifically how Iraq could benefit from British experience in developing Iraq's oil and agriculture resources. The Iraqi Prime Minister said that his government's priorities would include the provision of employment, health services, and education in those areas that have suffered historically from neglect, and the speeding up of the reconstruction of the electricity sector. The two Prime Ministers agreed on the urgent necessity of taking all steps to combat terrorism and violence and defeat those who want to undermine Iraq's new democracy. The MNF is in Iraq under UN resolution 1546 and will stay only as long as the Iraqi government wishes it to. The MNF, for its part, is committed to staying until the Iraqi government is satisfied that Iraqi forces can take on the security responsibility themselves. That is the objective timetable to which Prime Minister Maliki referred in his speech yesterday. The Iraqi government will, in the weeks ahead, work with the MNF on the details of the transition to Iraqi control. The Iraqiisation of security means that, as security

responsibility grows, so the MNF can over time reduce its presence and focus instead on the role of helping train and develop the Iraqi security forces.

In this context, the two Prime Ministers noted the growing readiness of the Iraqi security forces to take responsibility for the security needs of the Iraqi people, which was demonstrated during the referendum on the constitution and the December elections. Over 264,000 members of the Iraqi Security Forces have now been trained and equipped. By the end of 2006, the target of 325,000 should have been reached. The two governments agreed that they looked forward to Iraqi forces progressively taking on full responsibility for security from the Multinational Forces in the cities and provinces of Iraq, on the basis of conditions set out by the Iraqi government to this end.

This would start in some provinces early in this government's period of office, and over the next eighteen months, other provinces and cities will follow. They anticipated that, by the end of this year, responsibility for much of Iraq's territorial security should have been transferred to Iraqi control.

The two Prime Ministers also discussed the situation in Basra and agreed to work closely on ensuring greater security and stability there. Vice President Abdel-Mehdi has been asked to take specific responsibility for improving the situation there. A high level Iraqi delegation will visit Basra soon.

End text

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